

## Memorial Day Message from Command Sergeant Major A. Frank Lever III

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Command Sergeant Major  
of the Army National Guard,  
Command Sgt. Maj. A.  
Frank Lever III

After the people we respect and cherish leave this world, how do we keep them alive in our hearts?

By treasuring our memories of them.

We may display a favorite picture, go through a box of keepsakes or tend a gravesite. We choose our own times and ways – as individuals – to remember our loved ones.

Remembering our loved ones – as a nation – is what we do on Memorial Day. Established three years after the end of the Civil War, Memorial Day was intended

to show honor and respect to the men and women who died protecting the American ideals of freedom, liberty and justice for all.

This Memorial Day, we have all-too-fresh memories of Americans who have sacrificed their lives in far-away countries liberating oppressed populations and capturing terrorists. Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have even claimed members of our own National Guard family. All the more reason for us to take time from our holiday weekend to fly the flag, visit a cemetery or attend a memorial service.

Take time to remember.

And take time to honor our fallen patriots. They would do the same for us. And they would not want us to dishonor their sacrifice by needlessly harming ourselves with careless or unsafe behavior over the holiday weekend.

As always, I thank you, citizen-soldiers, for your continuing service, whether in our homeland or overseas. I also sincerely thank your families and employers for supporting your service. We are simply following in the muddy, sandy footsteps of those who came before us – those we honor this Memorial Day – and keeping our beloved country strong, free and proud.

God bless America!